

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

VOL. LI.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1854.

No. 13.

CASES OF POISONING BY THE EXTERNAL APPLICATION OF CORROSIVE SUBLIMATE.

BY H. R. DE RICCI, MEDICAL OFFICER OF THE BALLYMAHON UNION WORKHOUSE.

CASES of poisoning by mercurial preparations are of so rare occurrence, that I am induced to lay before the profession the following account, in which death was the result of the outward application of corrosive sublimate for the treatment of porrigo of the scalp.

P. and W. B., brothers, one aged 11, and the other 7 years, had been suffering from tinea favosa, or porrigo, for a very long period. As well as I could discover, the eldest had labored under it for about six years, and the youngest for about three.

They first came under my notice about a year ago, when they applied for relief at my dispensary; but finding, I suppose, that the cure was not proceeding sufficiently quick, and that I was not torturing their heads with painful applications, they soon gave up attending; and eventually, in April last, they applied to one Corny Mack, a shoemaker by trade, but well known through the country as a "skilful man," and he engaged to cure them in a week.

I am induced to believe that they were displeased with my mode of treatment, because on several occasions they *complained* that the ointment I gave them *caused no pain*, and they several times asked me for pitch plasters, which I always refused; for I have found by experience, in my workhouse hospital, that Dr. Neligan's mode of treatment is decidedly the only one I know of, which offers a chance of cure. I speak thus decidedly upon this matter, because when I began the profession I started with the generally-received idea that porrigo is incurable; but having had my hospital at one time filled with paupers drafted from three other workhouses, and among them having chanced to get a large proportion of children affected with porrigo, every one of whom had been under some kind of treatment or other; I instituted a series of experiments in order to test Dr. Neligan's mode of treatment, and satisfy my own mind. The result was as follows:—Of the children treated constitutionally, as he recommends, some recovered; whereas of those who were treated by local applications of the most varied kind, very few were even improved. But to return to my cases.

The father of these unfortunate children having made a bargain with

the quack, sent them to his house on or about the 15th of April last, and whilst there, Mack rubbed into their heads a white ointment (which I subsequently learned from himself was made with two drachms of corrosive sublimate, and one ounce of tallow). If my applications had been painless, this made ample atonement for all my deficiencies ; pain most agonizing at once set in, and before the doctor shoemaker had done *rubbing in* the second, the first was in torture, screaming that his head was on fire.

The operation being completed on both the children's heads, they returned home, and by the time they reached there, their sufferings were so intense that they could be heard screaming from every part of the village where they lived, and, in about *forty minutes* from the application of the ointment, they were completely delirious. Vomiting of green matter, to a large amount, also set in, together with pains in their bowels, diarrhoea and bloody stools, all in less than three quarters of an hour from the application of the ointment. Thus they continued from bad to worse, till death put an end to their sufferings, the youngest on the seventh day, and the eldest on the ninth day of their illness. During the whole of this time they had not one intermission, and from the moment they returned from Mack's to the hour of their death the screaming, the vomiting and the purging never once ceased.

The youngest child having died, an inquest was held, and I was directed by the coroner to make a dissection of the body, which I did thirty-eight hours after death, and gave in my written opinion "that deceased had died from the effects of a mineral poison, probably a preparation of mercury or of arsenic."

These were the appearances I found:—Body well formed, and not at all emaciated ; cadaveric rigidity well marked. On examining the head I found the scalp studded with small, depressed, circular ulcers of about one inch to an inch and a half in diameter, with fragments of dock leaves adhering to them ; these being scraped off, the bottom of the ulcer presented a peculiar yellow tint, and on making an incision into it perpendicularly to the surface of the cranium, this yellow appearance was seen to penetrate the entire substance of the scalp : it was of firmer consistence than the adjoining sound pieces of skin, and felt under the knife like cutting through a piece of brawn. I removed the calvarium, and found nothing worthy to note except a peculiar dryness of the entire surface of the brain, which was also present in the ventricles and the spinal canal. The substance of the brain itself was firm and white, sprinkled with minute red points, but not in great number. On opening the abdomen I was again struck by the extreme dryness of all the peritoneal surface. The liver was large, but not extremely so, and its substance on section appeared normal ; the gall-bladder was distended with bile, contrary, I believe, to what has been generally stated to be the case in poisoning by corrosive sublimate. The intestines, as they lay in situ, appeared blotched with pink, purple and brown spots, and a perfect mass of intus-susceptions—I counted twenty-three. On opening the stomach, which was moderately distended, I found the mucous membrane injected with red blood throughout, presenting the most beautiful

arborescent appearance, but not the smallest ulceration or softening. The duodenum was healthy, but the jejunum, ileum, colon and rectum, were all in the highest state of inflammation, especially the lower third of the ileum, and the commencement of the colon, about the ileo-cæcal valve, which was not only inflamed, but studded with some small patches of ulceration, about the size of a pea.

The pancreas, kidneys and spleen, were all healthy; the bladder empty, and contracted to the size of a chestnut.

While this examination was going on, the elder brother died. On the following day, sixteen hours after death, I made an examination of his body also, the details of which I need not give, as the appearances were exactly similar to those just described, with the following exceptions:—The gall-bladder was empty and highly contracted; the urinary bladder quite full; the ulcerations of the intestines were also more extensive, and the stomach presented, in addition to the beautiful pink arborescence above described, some few black spots of extravasated blood.

I had seen this last child alive about two hours before he expired; his countenance was then expressive of extreme anxiety and pain; round his mouth, for the space of about an inch and a half, there was a rash, such as appears often in poisoning by arsenic; he was quite delirious, and died shortly after in convulsions.

The principal points of interest which appear to me worth noticing in the two foregoing cases are, first, the extreme rapidity with which all the severe symptoms set in. So far as I have been able to learn, from the very few cases of external poisoning by corrosive sublimate which are on record, pain has set in immediately in some of the cases; but vomiting and bloody stools have not commenced for hours and days. Now in the foregoing, although, for the sake of greater certainty, I have said that forty-five minutes elapsed between the inunction and the commencement of the bloody stools, yet I believe that I could reduce that interval to thirty or thirty-five minutes, as the children were attacked at once on reaching home, and the distance is easily walked in half an hour or less.

Another interesting feature was the total absence of pyalism in both cases, and the appearance of cancrum oris in the youngest; whilst a rash very similar to that which occurs after arsenical poisoning appeared round the mouth of the eldest.

The eldest child passed water throughout his illness, although in diminished quantity, and his bladder was found full on dissection.

The youngest had complete suppression of urine from the commencement; and in him I found the urinary bladder empty and contracted, whilst the gall-bladder was distended with bile, contrasting with the elder brother, in whom these conditions were reversed.

The following is the verdict, which was unanimously agreed to by twenty-three highly-intelligent jurymen at the inquest; and before giving it I must premise that, in addition to the other evidence, the quack admitted that he had applied an ointment to these children's heads on the day they were taken ill:—"That deceased came by his death from the effects of a poisonous substance applied to his head for the cure of a disease of the scalp by a person or persons unknown to us."—*Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science.*

SMALLPOX OCCURRING TO THE FŒTUS IN UTERO.

BY R. AULSEBROOK, ESQ., M.R.C.S.E. AND L.S.A.

I AM desirous of placing upon record the following case of smallpox occurring to the fœtus in utero, which came under my observation in the year 1834, the entire particulars of which I have not been able, from circumstances, to gather together until the present time.

Variola existed in Berton, near Aylesbury, Bucks, in November, 1833, contiguous to the residence of Jacob W——, a baker in that village. His son, who had never been vaccinated, caught the disease, as it was supposed, from the family of a neighbor, and the eruption was observed in him on Saturday, November 30th. On Sunday, December 1st, Mrs. W—— and all her other children were vaccinated, for the first time, by Mr. W. Hayward, surgeon, of Aylesbury, with whom I was then resident as visiting assistant. The vaccination was successful in all, excepting one daughter, who, however, was successfully re-vaccinated by me at the end of a week. Mrs. W—— had but one vesicle; but there is now (June, 1854) a tolerable scar visible. Fourteen days before her confinement, Mrs. W—— states that she remembers most distinctly on that day that a most nauseating and depressing effect was produced in her by the odor of one of the stools from her variolous son, whom she was nursing; and on the 4th of January, 1834, a fortnight from the above sensation produced in her, and five weeks, minus one day, after her vaccination, she was delivered of the child the subject of this notice. On examining the infant almost immediately after its birth, I observed on the abdomen some spots, differing in size and appearance; others were discovered on the loins and back, and on the face and neck, those on the latter parts being most numerous. At the inner angle of one of the eyes was a pustule, nearly matured, of the size of a common smallpox pustule, and others of the same size were found on the hands. On the following day the eruption was considerably more out; each pustule had a distinct red inflamed base, was depressed in the centre, and had unequivocally the true variolous character; a cluster of them existed at the left side of the tongue near the apex, and one on the dorsum of that organ towards the root.

The child was feeble, did not suck, nor take scarcely anything by the mouth, and early on the third day expired. Mrs. W—— had herself no illness, nor any manifestation of the disease apart from the nausea arising from the effluvia before mentioned, which she perceived on the fourteenth day prior to her confinement, and at which time it is perhaps scarcely questionable the taint was communicated to the fœtus in the womb.

Having had the honor of an acquaintance for many years with Mr. Robert Ceely, of Aylesbury, and knowing how extensive the labors of that gentleman have been on this general subject, constituting him, indeed, by common consent, the greatest living authority upon it, I mentioned this case to him, and he has pointed my attention to two examples recorded by Dr. Jenner in the "Medico-Chirurgical Transactions" for 1809, page 269, in which the fœtus in utero became affected, the

mother escaping any external manifestation of the disease. Dr. Jenner adduces those cases to show the continued susceptibility to variola through life ; but as the cases differ as to particulars, I shall briefly state them.

In one of those cases the mother had had smallpox herself many years before, but had never been vaccinated ; and on meeting in the street, very shortly before her confinement, a child covered with the disease, and loathsome in appearance, she was very sensibly affected. The sensations passed off, and she had no outward manifestations of the disease ; but five days after her delivery, pustules appeared on the infant, and the diseased went through its usual stages, though in a mild form.

In the other case related, smallpox had been introduced into the house by the parish surgeon (1808) inoculating three of the sons of the family, but the mother was *vaccinated* by another surgeon. The vaccination was successful, and in five weeks after its performance (during four weeks of which time she had been exposed to the variolous infection of her three sons) she was delivered of a female child, which on its birth was found affected with the smallpox eruption. The surgeon (Mr. Gervis, of Ashburton, Devonshire), whose case the above was, distinctly states that at no period after the exposure of the mother to the variola in the house, did she evince any sign of being affected by the effluvium ; yet the disease was transmitted through her system to the constitution of the infant, herself clearly escaping *any* kind of manifestation.

In the case I have related, and which came under my own notice, the mother, it will be borne in mind, had been vaccinated, and successfully ; but, notwithstanding, had, fourteen days prior to the birth of the child, and three weeks after her vaccination, "a most nauseating and depressing effect produced on her by the odor of one of the stools from her variolous son."

This strong perception of the variolous infection was not, however, sufficient against the protective influence of the vaccine matter which had been introduced into her system, to produce any development in her of the smallpox, and the infection passed to the fœtus in the womb.

The value of this case, in so far as it may be considered to possess interest, consists, it may perhaps be said, in this, that it sets forth, at one and the same time, and in a more palpable way than any previously recorded, the *continued susceptibility to variola after vaccination* ; and yet the protective influence of the vaccine lymph in operation, guarding the system so far in this instance as to prevent any eruption appearing, or any other than a transitory affection of the health.—*London Lancet*.

EFFECTS OF MEDICINES ON THE HEALTHY HUMAN SYSTEM.

BY E. C. ATKINSON, M.D., DOVER, IOWA.

THE science of therapeutics has now attained a degree of perfection at least equal to that of any other. The prescriptions of the physician, who merits the name, are no longer influenced by magical incantations, and visionary notions of relations and affinities which never existed. His

opportunities enable him to acquire a comprehension of the relations of medicines to each other, and to diseased action, so that he can rest his judgment on the legitimate basis of sound philosophy. After determining the pathology of the case before him, the experienced practitioner may generally prescribe with singular confidence as to the effect which will follow, often eradicating disease in its incipency, controlling it in its culmination and decline, and alleviating what it cannot cure.

With the physiological effects of medicines, however, we are not so well acquainted. The science of toxicology is yet in its infancy. This arises not only from the fact that it is a subject of comparatively modern inquiry, but from the limited field of observation to which the student of this department of science is necessarily restricted.

While he may have daily opportunities of witnessing the effect of curative agents in disease, he is indebted chiefly to the occasional circumstance of accident, or criminal design, for testing their effects in health. Nor is this the only difficulty he has to encounter; under the same modifying influences, the action of medicine is less uniform in the healthy than in the diseased state.

When disease invades the system, it levels to a great extent its peculiar sympathies and idiosyncrasies, and establishes a tolerance of the agents necessary for its cure. In health, on the other hand, with all its sympathies in full play, each system is acted on differently. Thus we might give a certain quantity of tinct. opii to a number of individuals of the same nativity, and apparently of the same condition; but while we should find the lives of some destroyed by its effect, others would hardly be in the least affected; a fact not referable to their muscular strength, but to a different susceptibility of their nervous systems to its action.

Again, medicines sometimes exhibit a specific effect on the healthy system, to a knowledge of which their effect on the same system in disease furnishes us no precedent. An interesting illustration of this principle recently came under my notice.

An old lady of much experience as a nurse, asked me for a mild laxative, cautioning me at the same time not to give her rhubarb, for said she, "it always gives me violent strangury." A few weeks subsequently she called on me again for a similar prescription. I gave her rhubarb concealed in pills; a severe strangury was the result, which, however, was soon relieved. A few months after she suffered from a severe attack of erysipelas, during the course of which she was troubled by a persistent watery diarrhoea, for which I gave her rhubarb at several different times, with no other than the best effects. Since her recovery, I have been informed of another case on whom rhubarb produced the same bad result. With these facts before us, it is obvious that some time must elapse before toxicology can be considered a matured science resting on a firm foundation. The task, however, by the energy of the medical profession, will doubtless in due time be accomplished.

Without further preliminary, I submit the following record of cases for publication, without attempting a philosophical analysis of the facts which they contain.

Effects of Opium. CASE I.—Mrs. C., aged 69, never had much sickness; intellectual faculties but little impaired; was advised by a friend to take tinct. opii for a slight diarrhoea; accordingly took 30 gts. on going to bed. About fifteen minutes after retiring, her moanings awakened her daughter, who found her in great distress, though sufficiently rational to inform her what she had taken. Her daughter at once sent for medical aid, but before I arrived she was dead. I ascertained that about fifteen minutes after the toxical effects were first exhibited, she sank into a perfect coma, and in about two hours died.

CASE II.—Mr. B., aged 18 years, on account of some difficulty with his lady-love, attempted suicide by taking of tinct. opii 20 gts. This small quantity, however, produced an extreme impression. After taking it, he retired to his room. One hour after, when found, the following symptoms were presented: pulse moderately full, beating but 40 per minute, stertorous respiration, countenance livid and suffused, skin moist and cool, extreme stupor, total insensibility to external impressions, and powers of life sinking. After trying a variety of means for his relief, with no apparent good effect, we resorted to showering his head with cold water, under the influence of which he gradually recovered, though after he revived there was for some hours a great tendency to relapse, requiring the most vigilant care and repeated applications of the water.

CASE III.—G., a child of one week old, strong and healthy—during the night its mother gave it 8 gts. of laudanum to keep it quiet. It sank into a stupor, in which state it remained for a space of nearly ten hours, after which, by the use of energetic means, it was aroused, and slowly recovered. During convalescence it had several severe convulsions, from which it was completely restored.

CASE IV.—C., a child seven days old, large and healthy; its mother gave it 7 gts. tinct. opii in the night to keep it quiet; in about an hour it sank into a stupor. At the end of about two hours I was called in. It then presented all the symptoms of extreme narcotism. Notwithstanding our utmost efforts, it died in about eight hours; it revived several times, and we fondly hoped the worst was over, but the nervous system had received an impression incompatible with life. The closing symptoms were severe convulsions. I shall ever regret that I did not make use of artificial respiration, the only remedy which I think might have been of benefit. The practice of giving laudanum to very young infants, either in health or disease, cannot be too severely reprobated. I have met with several cases of convulsions in infants, under 1 year old, caused, I have reason to suppose, by the secondary effects of some form of opium.

CASE V.—Mr. A., a young man, aged 20 years, of nervous temperament, good habits and good constitution, while suffering from toothache, was advised by a careless physician to take laudanum. He accordingly purchased an ounce, and being ignorant of its nature took three eighths of it. After taking it he started for his home, five miles distant, and with great effort reached it, retired immediately to his room, and slept ten hours. At the end of this time I saw him; all the symptoms of narcotism were passing off, and in two days he was well.

I once heard a physician of reputation and experience testify that three

drachms of laudanum retained on the stomach of an adult, would "in all cases as a general rule produce death." Had he been well acquainted with the different works on toxicology, he would have known that this rule has too many exceptions to be depended on. Equally as intelligent testimony is frequently given by physicians in medico-legal cases, to the great disgrace of our profession.

Effects of Morphia. CASE I.—C., a boy 2 years old, took one sixth of a grain of sulph. morphia, through mistake for calomel. In about one hour he was seized with opisthotonos, which continued about five hours, when the life powers suddenly yielded. Some little stupor was present prior to the attack coming on.

I have never known this effect to follow a narcotic in any other instance. In this case it must have been produced by morphia, as there was no other cause for it.

Effect of Camphor. CASE I.—L., a man aged 45, an inveterate drunkard, during a debauch drank about one and a half ounce of saturated tinct. of camphor; was seized with convulsions one hour afterwards, and died in forty minutes.

CASE II.—M. A., a young man aged 21 years, while walking the street with a friend, *accidentally* swallowed one drachm of gum camphor. Nothing more was thought of it, until one hour after, when he suddenly fell to the ground while talking, and remained in a complete stupor for about half an hour. He then revived and resumed conversation as if nothing had happened—no medication was resorted to.

I have on record three other similar cases; complete anæsthesia was the result in each, and no bad consequences ensued.

CASE III.—Mrs. K., aged 34. Five powders of camphor of three grains each, pulverized by addition of a few drops of spts. nit. dulc., were left her for after-pains; after taking the third, convulsions supervened, though mild, and soon passed off; on the next day the other two were given with like effect. Some authors state that camphor produces convulsions only when taken in solution, a rule which evidently has exceptions.

Sulphate of Zinc. CASE I.—D., a young man aged 28, took one tablespoonful of sulphate of zinc, supposing it to be Epsom salts; violent vomiting, and subsequently violent purging, ensued. These effects soon terminated spontaneously, and on the next day he resumed business. I examined the sulphate of zinc, and found it a good article, slightly damaged by contact with the atmosphere.—*Iowa Medical Journal.*

OBSERVATIONS ON EPILEPSY.

[Continued from page 242.]

PRECOCITY an Exciting Cause of Epilepsy.—Precocity of intellect—or, rather, undue stimulus applied to the minds of children—is another fruitful source of *epilepsy*. That system of mental education which attempts to make men and women, scholars and philosophers, of little children, should be discountenanced by every parent, guardian, teacher, and, es-

pecially, by every *physician*. You, Mr. Editor, some time since published an article in your Journal, upon "too much study in our public schools." Never was oracle more true than those remarks. I wish every committee man, teacher, and the superintendent of these schools, and his honor the mayor, would not only read, but heed those statements.

The day of *infant* schools for *study* has passed. Thanks to a kind Providence that it has: its *death* will be the life of many a child. If one half the study now required of pupils in our public schools were relinquished, and the children compelled to practise some athletic exercise instead, they would be great gainers, both as it respects mind and body.

Urge a child prematurely forward, and he soon becomes jaded; his intellect loses its balance. Nervous disease supervenes, and the little bright and sprightly child, the idol of its fond parents, their "little pride," soon becomes the object of their solicitude and painful anxiety. The precocious intellect was quite too active for the body—"the sword too sharp for the scabbard." With the pressing studies, the nervous irritation increased, and bodily health began to fail. The bright flashes of thought, the sparkling witticisms of the pale little thing, bursting from the overtasked mind, called forth loud applause from inconsiderate friends and ignorant admirers. Next followed nervous *spasms*; and, as the nervous system continued to give way, and the bodily energy to decline, *more food* was claimed; and the *more* food that was taken, the worse for the child. The twitchings and spasms increased, till by some extra mental effort, or sudden fright, or overloaded stomach, the spasm became the convulsion, and *epilepsy*, with all its horrors, was apparent; and under the ordinary treatment, in all probability, irretrievable *idiocy* lies in the future before the child.

Such has been, and is now, the course pursued by many a parent; and such a physiological and hygienic perversion of nature, and of all her laws of action, can never fail to be visited by a sad retribution of an exhausted system of both mind and body. Here is another proof that epilepsy springs up in an *exhausted* state of bodily and mental energy; and, I may add, when the usual depleting course of *treatment* is superadded to this already jagged and worn-down child, he stands but a small chance of "ever seeing good days in the land of the living." But, as I shall speak of the *treatment* hereafter, I forbear at present.

Let me here warn parents and teachers, and ask *physicians* to warn them, against such a *hot-bed* course of education as I have portrayed above, and is too often pursued. Beware of wishing to see your son or your pupil a *genius*. You will be quite as likely, in the end, to see him an *idiot*, or be called to follow him to an untimely grave. If you are a parent, by pursuing such a course, instead of planting a tree which will furnish you with refreshing shade and comfort in your old age, you will throw the dark mantle of the most bitter reflection over the meridian of your life, and be compelled to drain to the dregs the chalice you have poisoned, in the blighted body and unstrung mind of your child. Such precocious children need *holding in*, rather than *spurring on*, in intellectual culture. Better, far better, would it be for them, and the parent, if, like Rousseau, in the training of his *Emilius*, they

should not be allowed to learn a word till they numbered a dozen winters. Such an early development of the mental powers is altogether unnecessary, even if the child is designed for a scholar. Almost all our scholars graduate from college *too early*. Their bodies are injured by too much study in *early life*, and their education is not half as thorough, or as valuable to them, as it would be if they were half a dozen years older than they usually are. They verify the old adage, "soon ripe, soon rotten." Men of the brightest parts, and the most brilliant scholars and philosophers, have been considered almost *dunces* and *blundering logger-heads* when children. But they have endured and studied for a long life, while the *hot-house plants* have put forth their butterfly-brilliances, have shone for a day, and withered, like the angry prophet's "gourd," the first night. Sir Isaac Newton, Walter Scott, and Andrew Fuller, were all dull scholars in childhood; and yet, who have been more eminent than they in the field which each chose for himself? Each of them accomplished more in philosophy, or literature, or polemics, than all the men who were ever reared from precocious children. Our whole educational system is in a wrong direction. It commences wrong, and is carried on and ends in the same way. It is opposed to physiological laws. They demand the education of the *physical* powers first; this commences with the mental.

The treatment of epilepsy laid down in medical works generally, it is believed, has augmented, rather than relieved, epileptics. From the remarks already made by the authors quoted, it is evident that the use of the lancet is in no way serviceable in epilepsy. I am not now speaking of epilepsy complicated with apoplexy or with any other disease; but of epilepsy alone. Bleeding is not necessary to remove congestion *before* the fit, for that does not take place till the *fit has come on*. It is not necessary to *cut the fit short*, for both Drs. Radcliffe and Copland have shown that it not only does not do that, but that it induces a new attack more violent than the preceding. For what, then, can it be necessary? Its effect is to debilitate the already too much debilitated system.

The same may be said of the administration of *purgatives* in general, in cases of epilepsy. I would not say but that in a person of robust habit, not predisposed to be nervous, who had induced an epileptic seizure by eating enormous quantities of indigestible food, a *cathartic* might do less mischief than the retention of such materials in the system.

Under such treatment as is above referred to, for epileptics, it is not strange that both patients and physicians should become discouraged and settle down into the belief that these were *incurable* cases, and as "*sic vovère Parcas*," they must bear the calamity as well as possible, upon the principle of the old adage—that "what can't be cured must be endured."

Far be it from the writer to intimate that all cases of epilepsy are curable, and quite as far be it from him to deny that the course of treatment usually pursued has not oftener rendered such cases incurable, than the original disease did. In this opinion I am happily borne out by the remarks of Drs. Radcliffe and Davey in the London Lancet. Dr. R. showed that the condition of the patient "was itself an insuperable

objection to bleeding and purging in this malady, and an argument for the necessity of stimulants and tonics, and all means which could corroborate the system." Dr. Davey said, "Epileptics were best treated by tonics, and a judicious and discriminating diet. In the treatment of all nervous disorders, practitioners had gone too far generally, on the antiphlogistic system, by which he was sure many cases had been rendered incurable."

The idea that epilepsy has its origin in the blood may not be new, as it has already been shadowed forth in the remark quoted from Dr. Carpenter's Physiology. But we feel full well assured it is the *correct* idea. Long since, it was declared by the Jewish Lawgiver, Moses, that "the life of the flesh is the blood;" and though this idea has been controverted and re-asserted, rejected and re-revived, many times since the days of Moses, it is now generally conceded by physiologists that he was right, and that "the blood is the life." Every intelligent physician knows that almost all (perhaps quite) the chronic local diseases which invade and ultimately destroy the human body, originate in the blood. This is confessedly the case with cancer, scrofula, syphilis and consumption. Do what you will of a *local* nature; apply what remedies you please directly to the diseased organ; extirpate, burn, cauterize, scarify, inhale, bleed, blister, cup—all is to little purpose, unless you can eradicate the poison, and change, invigorate, purify and build up the system. In this respect no small share of medical practice, in by-gone days, has been carried on upon a wrong principle; and, happily for the good of the patient and the credit of the doctor, many eminent practitioners have recently seen the error and changed their practice. Twenty-five or thirty years ago almost every physician believed, for instance, that "*scrofula* was to be purged away by drastic cathartics, and bled away by the effusion of the crimson fluid;" and many a patient has been *cathartised* and *exsanguinated* till he found refuge only in the grave. But such practice at the present day would not be tolerated, and the doctor who should advise such practice in this disease would be considered half a century behind the age.

What is true, in this respect, of *scrofula*, is equally true of cancer, secondary syphilis and consumption. Not one of them can be cured, or was ever cured, by drastic cathartics, extirpation, or the shedding of blood. In cancer, for instance, it is now the expressed opinion of some of the best surgeons abroad, that, while the life of the patient may have been prolonged by the use of the knife in some few cases, on the whole, taking into account all the operations, it has been of no benefit, if not positively injurious. The same may be said of the other diseases above named; and it may be emphatically and truthfully said of *epilepsy*. Some remarks in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal (since these articles were commenced, Vol. LI., p. 151), from the pen of Dr. Cartwright, fully harmonize with the views here expressed. "The best definition," says Dr. C., "ever given of pulmonary consumption, was given by Dr. Benjamin Rush, when he called it an *all-overness*. He viewed it as a disease of the whole system, and not of any particular part.

It is an *all-overness*, because it is a disease of blood origin." This is undoubtedly correct, as it respects *consumption*, and the remarks may as truly be applied to *epilepsy*.

[To be continued.]

MORTALITY AMONG CHILDREN—NO. III.

BY W. A. ALCOTT, M.D.

ONE fruitful source of infantile mortality is medicine. Let not my medical friends accuse me of heterodoxy, in making this statement. I have reasons for my belief.

When I speak of medicine as a cause of infantile mortality, I have no reference—not the remotest—to that small amount of it which is given at the prescription of the family physician. There may have been error here; there certainly *has* been, in all time and countries, *unless it is our own*. But I waive all this. Nor do I refer in particular to the enormous quantity of drugs and medicines taken without the prescription of any person duly qualified for the purpose beyond the pale of the family—a hundred times greater than the quantity given by all our regular physicians of every school.

But I would aim, chiefly, in these paragraphs, at what I have been accustomed to call maternal dosing and drugging. Bad as the world is, in other departments of drugging, this is more prolific of infantile disease and premature death than all else, except bad cookery; of which, by the way, I have said something in a former number.

Mothers assume to understand the constitution of their own children; and almost deem it an insult to be told of their mistake. Yet they are mistaken. Reasoning *a priori*, it is impossible, or at least next to impossible, for those who are situated as mothers generally are, to understand enough of the laws of hereditary descent, temperament, &c., to be able to understand what is almost impossible to the wisest physiologists and physicians. And then, as regards the plain matter of fact, their mistake is still more obvious. They almost every day, for example, treat their scrofulous children—amounting to one third or one fourth of the whole—in a manner diametrically opposite to what they would have done had they understood the nature of the case and how the first symptoms of latent scrofula manifest themselves.

And yet it is almost as much as one's reputation is worth, whether in the profession or out of it, to run the risk of giving to our mothers this little piece of information. And the hazard is great in exact proportion to their ignorance. An ignorant mother is, next to the Pope of Rome, the most infallible of all human beings! I mean, of course, in her own estimation. You may reason, sometimes, with an intelligent mother—seldom with an ignorant one.

But whether ignorant or somewhat enlightened, the vast majority of our mothers doctor, more or less, their own children. At least, if they refuse to call it *doctoring*, they give them a vast amount of small elixirs, cordials, &c. The closets of not a few house-keepers are a complete

apothecary's shop. They may, it is true, have smaller parcels than the regular apothecary; but they have almost as great an assortment. And they not only keep it; they administer it. They may not intend it; they *do not mean to give much*; sometimes they really *think they do not give much*. But it comes to pass, in the course of the year, that much is given by somebody; and I greatly fear that the mother must be held responsible for it.

True it is, that no mother confesses to this crime of dosing and drugging. As it used to be with tight lacing of the chest, that no one was guilty herself, but almost everybody else was, so in this matter of drugging and dosing children. Yet how often have I seen these very mothers with their bottles or phials on the steamboats and railroads of our country—hardly willing to wait for the arrival of the cars at a “station,” before they administered the needful elixir, but actually administering it on the road!

But now for the consequences of this maternal dosing; for this it is with which medical men have chiefly to do. Next to bad food and wretched cookery, as I have before intimated, this error is productive of more sickness and premature death than any other. No physician knows what to do with a sick child, who has been thus tampered with. He may indeed *guess a little better* than others; but even *he* will often *guess wrong*. Their first passages are irritated, and perhaps inflamed; and if it were possible to make the right appliances either internally or externally, it would still puzzle the wisest head to know how to apportion the quantity so as to be more likely to do good than harm. Diseases, in these circumstances, as you know, are more apt to be severe and complicated, and the termination more likely to be fatal, especially if much medicine is used.

The worst remains to be told. As it is not always easy to trace the cause of severe, protracted or fatal infantile disease to maternal error, we not only contrive to kill, from generation to generation, by thousands and tens of thousands; but we partly kill by millions. If all the mischief that is done could be concentrated, as it were, in a few, and were to kill them outright, so that everybody might see that they fairly died of violence, there might be hope. But no; we seem to be left to grope on in ignorance, and not only to kill, continually, but to *partly* kill many more. We bring on, gradually, some disease or other; or we render an inherited disease, which might have been mild, very severe, or early fatal; or we aggravate, by over dosing, the symptoms of acquired diseases from other causes. We clip from the existence of one child or person, a year; from another, two or three years; from all, or almost all, something. The aggregate of these clippings, so to call them, every year, though it cannot be exactly ascertained, is, no doubt, fearfully great, and fearfully increasing.

I have sometimes thought maternal dosing was a little more mischievous in the families that confide in homœopathic and botanic treatment, than in those who adhere to the old system. I will tell you why. They seem to think vegetable medicine, and even small doses of mineral medicine, so harmless that they may dabble with them when and where

they please—almost without reserve or limitation. Perhaps this is not justly chargeable on the systems themselves, but only an incidental evil. But this does not alter matters of plain fact; and if the public are killing their children with too many small shot, as well as with musket and cannon balls, it should be known, that the evil may be guarded against, or, if possible, removed.

Auburn Dale, Sept. 9, 1854.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, OCTOBER 25, 1854.

Surgical Apparatus.—American surgeons have the reputation of being remarkably ingenious in devising instruments for facilitating surgical operations. To some extent this is true. That they are inventive, is undeniable—and in this respect, they only manifest a common peculiarity of our people. Labor-saving machines constitute a distinct branch of study with us. How to make water or steam labor economically, to relieve ourselves from doing by the sweat of the brow whatever is necessary, expedient or profitable to be done, is a standing pursuit. An easier, more expeditious or safer way of excising a tumor, securing an artery, or holding the extremities of fractured bones in place till nature has firmly united them, are also standing desiderata. Thus knives, needles, clasps, splints, trusses, tourniquets, &c., are perpetually undergoing modifications to obviate either real or imaginary defects in their construction. Thus our surgeons have contributed largely to the perfection to which many familiar instruments have attained. It is by no means an uncommon thing to be shown improvements of this kind in England, which are known to have originated on this side of the water. If those who have thus contributed to the successful practice of foreign surgeons were more careful to make a permanent record of their devices, when first introduced to public notice, they would secure the honor that belongs to a new invention, besides doing something towards advancing the claims of the country to those distinctions invariably accorded to inventive industry and intelligence.

Progressive Medicine.—An opinion is entertained, somewhat extensively, that absolute radicalism in professional matters, is progress. So far from coinciding in this view, a sensible man has no hesitation in declaring that any and every departure from a system founded on facts, is degeneracy. There are two directions in which weak minds and those who have no minds at all in regard to the objects contemplated in a true system of medical practice, are apt to run. One fritters away the little strength it has, in the ridiculous pursuit after specific remedies; while the other dwells with immense satisfaction upon the prospects of a mighty revolution, to be brought about by the promulgation of a new theory of disease. With the rise of a novel doctrine, the originator expects to rise also, of course, to enviable distinction; and to reap a golden harvest as the reward of his skill. The world is ready to be imposed upon at all times. Nothing can be so absurd as not to command the admiration of somebody. But of all humbugs, that of quackery has the greatest number of staunch advocates and

patrons. No one is so ignorant as not to be wise on this subject. Each judges of the efficacy of a proposed remedy, by its real or imaginary effects on himself. Those who certify to the curative properties of catholicons and drastic pills, are rarely afflicted with the disease from which they imagine themselves relieved, and therefore their testimony is totally unreliable. What do most of these certifiers, the broken-down victims to patent preparations, know of the vital forces? Yet they talk boldly, as though they actually understood the physiological laws of our being, of wonderful discoveries in the science of medicine. Scarcely a pretender omits to announce himself, with the pride of insolence, as one who is identified with medical progress. How absurd and preposterous, that a learned profession should be thus misrepresented and disgraced. Sound heads, cultivated intellects, and calm study and deliberation in regard to the resources of nature and art, are required in medicine, for the precious boon of health and life is at stake. The progress in medicine most in repute among those who have the ability to appreciate the true from the false, embraces the discovery, the corroboration and dissemination of facts. Nothing is admitted to be of value, that is not made certain; and when a certainty is established, which puts another power at the disposal of the medical practitioner, for the relief of suffering humanity, that is clearly medical progress.

Female Medical Schools.—Like those designed for the professional education of the sterner sex, the new colleges for females are making ample preparations for the autumnal lectures. It is an item of historical interest, which in after times will appear far more prominent and remarkable than at present, that the community both sympathize with and give support to these newly-developed institutions. The money is beginning to flow in upon them, as it always does upon favorite objects of a public nature in this country. Bequests will probably hereafter be made, professorships endowed, and ample funds provided for giving female medical schools all the character which accumulating wealth, talent and science can bestow. If we have national whims and sudden impulses, unlike those of civilized Europe, some of them may be extremely good. Schools of medicine for females belong almost, if not exclusively, to the United States. England would consider the organization of such an establishment, a monstrosity—a freak of dis-tempered fancy. Still this is a movement which may be extensively imitated abroad, by and by, however much their scientific men may laugh at Brother Jonathan in 1854, for his whims and novel conceits. Women have brains, and when cultivated, show themselves, in many circumstances and conditions, equal to those who are technically denominated their lords and masters. At all events, they will now have an opportunity for demonstrating what they can do in the field of practical medicine; and if some of them occasionally fall short of the high expectations of their friends, it will be no killing affair, since men also frequently disappoint the world in the same line of labor. We wish success to the female medical schools, and prosperity to the fair pupils.

The London Lancet of Sept. 30th, after ridiculing the idea of the study and practice of medicine by females, gives the following piece of information in regard to the recent movements of a lady who has before been alluded to in this Journal—

"A Miss Doctor Blackwell, a graduate of Cleveland College, Ohio, having completed a course of clinical study at the Royal Maternity Hospital, Edin-

burgh, has applied to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary for permission to prosecute her studies in the female wards of that institution. It is supposed that her intention is ultimately to eclipse the home-bred lady graduates of America, by returning to New York with the degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of Edinburgh, and the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of London. That a purpose so praiseworthy should be opposed by the refusal of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary to accede to the request of Miss Doctor Blackwell, we cannot but regret. In order that Miss Doctor Blackwell may not return to America, there to propagate the injurious reproach against our national character, that we know not how to encourage females in the pursuit of medical knowledge and collegiate honors, we beg leave to inform her and her sister-graduates, that the Royal College of Surgeons of England is animated by a more enlightened and transatlantic liberality; and that the new order of Licentiates in Midwifery is open, by an act of Parliament, to 'persons' of both sexes."

Prescription for Hooping Cough.—The following combination of *old and tried remedies* has been found serviceable in relieving the distressing paroxysms attendant upon hooping-cough in children:—*R.* Pulv. coccus cacti, ℥ii.; Pulv. carb. potassæ, ʒi.; Moschus, gr. viii.; Syrupi crocus sativus, Syrupi bals. tolu, Muc. gum acacia, aa ʒxss. Misce. Half a teaspoonful for a child two years old, four or five times a day.

The Epidemic Cholera in London.—Some little excitement has been occasioned, within the last week or two, by the publication in this country of letters from London, conveying the information that the present severe epidemic in that city was not the cholera, as represented in the Registrar-General's returns, but a new outbreak of the veritable plague of a former century. Its re-appearance was said to be occasioned by the digging up of the ground on the spot where the victims of the plague, in the reign of King Charles II., were buried in heaps. From our files of the London Lancet, which have been received up to the date of Sept. 30th, it would appear that there is no foundation for these rumors, at least so far as the nature of the disease, which has recently so severely afflicted the inhabitants of London, is concerned. No mention is made of its differing from the ordinary Asiatic cholera, nor is any allusion made to the "panic" spoken of by the foreign letter writers. The number of deaths by the disease each week, to Sept. 23d, is shown by the following numbers, which are truly formidable, although they are now weekly decreasing. As mentioned in this Journal of Oct. 4th, the number of deaths by cholera the first week of its re-appearance, was 5; then as follows: 26, 133, 399, 644, 729, 847, 1287, 2050, 1549, 1284. The whole number to the above date, is put down at 8953. In 1849, at the same date, the cholera had destroyed 12,664 of the inhabitants of London. The following, from the Lancet of Sept. 16, condensed from the Registrar-General's weekly return, contains the only allusion, which we have noticed, to the great malignancy of the epidemic in certain localities.

"Much discussion has taken place as to what may have been the chief exciting cause of the particularly severe *local* outbreaks of the disease which have taken place within the last fortnight in certain parts of London and its suburbs. Much obloquy has been cast upon the Commissioners of Sewers for selecting this particular time for the purpose of opening so many conduits, to

the great danger and alarm of the inhabitants of certain districts. Wood street, Cheap side; and Suffolk street, Clerkenwell, have been especially referred to, as also the districts of King street, Cannon row, &c., near the houses of Parliament. We ourselves can testify to the alarm of the residents, and the disgusting smells, &c., pervading some spots in Westminster, where mounds of black clay and seething mud are piled up almost to the first floor windows, the whole length of a narrow (now impassable) thoroughfare. The open sewers of St. George's, Camberwell, and certain parts of the great Chelsea sewer, have received, in particular, animadversion.

"A correspondent in the Times of Tuesday, adverts to the probability of the recent severe outbreaks of cholera in districts east of Regent street being greatly induced by house-drains communicating with the leading sewers not being 'trapped.' The mockery of such a system of sewerage or drainage must be obvious to all. As it would be unwise to disturb these sewer openings at the present moment, when the atmosphere seems tainted with the prevailing epidemic, it has been suggested that a tarred sack should in dry weather be laid over each street grating, so as to prevent the effluvia. It would be but a trifling exercise of trouble for the servant of the person whose house might be in front of the grating, or for the police during the night, to fold the piece of tarred sacking back, so as to allow of the escape of water, should a fall of rain occur.

"In connection with the sudden and intense malignancy of the irruption of the cholera on the south side of Oxford street, and certain portions of Soho, the following amongst other communications to the public papers, has appeared in *The Times*.—The pit alluded to by Macaulay as having been dug at the east of Regent street, opposite Conduit street, when the great plague was raging, and into which the dead-carts had nightly shot corpses by scores, is situated within the area bounded by Argyll place, King street, and Marlborough street. Little Marlborough street stands directly over the pit. In excavating for sewers here some time since, the ground disturbed was found to consist chiefly of black decayed animal matter, mixed with bones. On discovering this, precaution was taken not to remove more of it than was possible, what was thrown out was covered over with quick lime, and carted away, and the contract hastily completed. The sewers hereabout, to my knowledge (with the exception of the sewer in Great Marlborough street), are as perfect as sewers can be, and free from accumulation. What can have produced the fearful mortality in this neighborhood I cannot conceive. It is true that the houses generally are closely built together, and are very dilapidated, with little or no open areas or yards back or front. They are, moreover, densely populated by the poor, most of the floors and rooms being let off to separate families and persons."

"From the reservoir within the garden enclosure of St. James's square, the whole of the water has been drawn off, and the open space filled up with earth, a fresh grassplot being laid on the surface, which will doubtless be not less fragrant to the inhabitants than the stagnant pool of water that has for so many years been suffered to exist."

The following refers to a mode of treatment said to have been very successful in the Mauritius, where the cholera has also raged.

"It is to administer thirty grains of ipecacuanha, and two grains of tartar emetic, as soon as possible, followed by quantities of warm water in the usual way (i. e., from six to ten quarts), and repeat the same dose if all the bad symptoms have not disappeared after the result of the first (but which was not often requisite,) followed next morning by a dose of castor oil. In some instances thirty drops of diluted sulphuric acid were administered after the emetic."

Demand for Chloroform.—Some inquiry is necessary to ascertain whether physicians resort to chloroform in obstetrics, as much as they did a year or two since. An impression that it injured the child, may have had a restraining influence. Certain it is that very many were at first too ready to fly to it in ordinary cases, without discriminating properly under what circumstances unconsciousness of the mother was demanded for her security. Who will please to inform the medical public?

New Works on Science.—There are very many publications of the present time which treat exclusively on the higher departments of science, but yet possess a fascination for the general reader on account of the agreeable manner in which they are written. The Bridgewater Treatises were adapted to all minds, while they upheld the true dignity of science. Books of this order have been gradually multiplying within the last few years, and the encouragement is sufficient to call out new writers, who will probably be successful in the same line. Prof. Owen's very curious book on the skeletons and teeth, abounds with details illustrative of the resources of nature, and the evidences of design in the adaptation of organs. Even a child could read it with pleasure, while a learned man would find himself refreshed by its profound considerations. Dr. Bushman's Principles of Animal and Vegetable Physiology, is another of this class of excellent productions. They both embrace subjects for conversation in all circles, and their moral tendency, to say nothing of the refining influences they exert over every order of minds, should give them currency throughout the country.

Medical Attendance on Servants.—The Dublin Medical Press, Aug. 23d, records a very interesting trial that recently took place in Mildenhall Co. Court, Eng. It was an action instituted by a surgeon against a gentleman for recovery of £11 0s 6d, the amount of his bill for attendance on said gentleman's housekeeper, who had broken her leg. It was clearly proved, in evidence, that the plaintiff had been sent for by the defendant, to visit his (the defendant's) servant; and his Honor laid it down as clear law, that if a master sent for a doctor, he was liable to pay for the attendance. Not only in law, but in justice, did he consider the defendant liable; for he considered it very hard that medical men should not be paid when they are at the beck and call of any person who may choose to send for their assistance; and if they refused to go, they became subject to a general outcry throughout the country for their want of humanity and Christian feeling. He therefore considered the plaintiff entitled to his claim for the whole amount, with costs.—*The Medical (Montreal) Chronicle.*

Tenacity of Life in the Infant.—The following case, illustrative of the remarkable tenacity of life in a human infant, is communicated to us by Dr. John Inabnit, of Oak Grove, Mississippi:—

"A negro girl, about 16 years of age, near this place, was delivered of a child on the night of the 12th of May; the child was born in the woods, and the mother, being alone, threw it away. It remained in this situation until the morning of the 14th, perfectly naked, exposed to the sun during the day, and to a flood of rain at night. When found it was as cold as a fish, and so remained for several hours. The time was not less than

thirty-six hours during which it lay naked, without food, in the open air, and yet it is still alive at the end of a fortnight, and I believe doing well.—*Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery.*

Medical Miscellany.—Sickness is abating at New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston, and other points at the South, where the mortality by yellow fever and cholera has been very severe.—Oysters and crabs at the South are represented to be diseased, of late, and many have been made sick by eating them.—Samuel Dunham, of Mansfield, Conn., died on the 12th of October, aged 100 years and 20 days. He leaves two brothers, aged 95 and 97 years. All three were soldiers of the revolution.—Statements in regard to the re-appearance of the plague in London, which once desolated that great city, are becoming quite circumstantial in the letters of foreign correspondents, but the London papers make no reference to the subject. On another page will be found some authentic information respecting the present epidemic there.—Cholera is everywhere on the wane, except in Turkey. It sweeps off the European troops faster than Russian bullets.—Smallpox is gradually showing itself, on the approach of cold weather, as it did the last season.—Different forms of fever, of an autumnal type, seem to be attracting attention, but they are generally manageable in skilful hands.—What has become of all the surgical instrument makers who formerly manufactured extensively in Boston?—Dr. Skinner's new fracture apparatus is attracting attention.—The spermatorrhœa rings, which have been extensively sold from the day they were invented, are still in active request. They are far superior to medications for effecting a radical cure.—Good openings for medical men are ready for occupancy both in Nebraska and Kansas. This is the proper time for going to those countries. The people there need good surgeons, with a proper variety of instruments, as well as physicians and druggists.—The bills of mortality in the Atlantic cities indicate an excellent state of health.—Dr. James Jackson of Boston, Drs. Martyn Payne and J. W. Draper of New York, Dr. Thomas D. Mutter of Philadelphia, and E. D. Mussey of Cincinnati, have each had conferred upon them the degree of Doctor of Laws.—Dr. Joseph Parrish, a physician of much ability and experience, so long and so favorably known as the editor of the "New Jersey Medical Reporter," has been appointed to the chair of Obstetrics in the Philadelphia College of Medicine.

ERRATUM.—On page 173, in Dr. Cox's recipe for a cholera emetic, for two "tablespoonfuls" of ginger, read two *teaspoonfuls*.

MARRIED.—In this city, 3d inst., Calvin G. Page to Susan H., daughter of Dr. N. C. Keep.—At Carmel, N. Y., Dr. J. H. Merritt to Miss A. L. Brown.

DIED.—In Lee, Mass., Dr. Coridon Guiteau.—Dr. Samuel Waring, of New York, lost on board the steamship Arctic.—In New Bedford, Silas Tompkins, M.D., aged 54 years.

Deaths in Boston for the week ending Saturday noon, Oct. 21st, 57. Males, 26—females, 31. Apoplexy, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 1—disease of the bowels, 2—congestion of the brain, 3—consumption, 15—convulsions, 3—cholera infantum, 3—croup, 2—dysentery, 7—dropsy, 1—drowned, 1—infantile diseases, 4—erysipelas, 1—typhus fever, 1—typhoid fever, 1—hemorrhage of the kidneys, 1—disease of the hip, 1—inflammation of the lungs, 2—disease of the liver, 1—marasmus, 1—old age, 1—purpura, 2—smallpox, 1—teething, 2.

Under 5 years, 22—between 5 and 20 years, 5—between 20 and 40 years, 20—between 40 and 60 years, 5—above 60 years, 5. Born in the United States, 42—Ireland, 13—England, 1—British Provinces, 1.

Charcoal as a Disinfectant.—Mr. Turnbull, about nine months ago, placed the bodies of two dogs in a wooden box, on a layer of charcoal-powder a few inches in depth, and covered them over with a quantity of the same material. Though the box was quite open, and kept in his laboratory, no effluvia was ever perceptible; and on examining the bodies of the animals at the end of six months, scarcely anything remained of them except their bones. Mr. Turnbull sent me a portion of the charcoal powder which had been most closely in contact with the bodies of the dogs. I submitted it for examination to one of my pupils, Mr. Turner, who found it contained comparatively little ammonia, not a trace of sulphuretted hydrogen, but very appreciable quantities of nitric and sulphuric acids, with acid phosphate of lime. Mr. Turner subsequently, about three months ago, buried two rats in about two inches of charcoal-powder, and a few days afterwards the body of a full-grown cat was similarly treated. Though the bodies of these animals are now in a highly putrid state, not the slightest odor is perceptible in the laboratory. From this short statement of facts, the utility of charcoal-powder as a means of preventing noxious effluvia from churchyards, and from dead bodies in other situations, such as on board ship, is sufficiently evident. Covering a churchyard to the depth of two or three inches with coarsely-powdered charcoal would effectually prevent any putrid exhalations ever finding their way into the atmosphere. Charcoal-powder also greatly favors the rapid decomposition of the dead bodies with which it is in contact, so that in the course of six or eight months little is left except the bones.—*DR. STENHOUSE, in Pharmaceutical Journal.*

Alum as an Emetic.—Besides the great usefulness of alum as an emetic for croup, it has been found in one case more efficient in poisoning by opium than the sulphate of zinc. The patient had swallowed an ounce of powdered opium! Thirty grains of sulphate of zinc were given him without effect, when Dr. Meigs being called in, he gave him half an ounce of powdered alum, which, with three tumblers of warm water, caused copious vomiting. After a short period, this treatment was repeated with a like effect, and the patient recovered. This case shows the powerful emetic properties of alum, which should be remembered in cases of emergency.—*Memphis Med. Rec.*

BOYLSTON MEDICAL SCHOOL.

THE regular course of instruction in the Boylston Medical School will be continued on the plan heretofore successfully pursued, and which the instructors are able to recommend with renewed confidence. It is similar to the method followed in the European Universities, and now so generally approved by the profession in this country. The course is so arranged, that those commencing their studies have every opportunity for acquiring a thorough and practical knowledge of the fundamental principles of Medicine, while, at the same time, the more advanced student is carefully assisted in his final preparations for the responsibilities of his professional life.

As formerly, unusual advantages will be offered for the study of Anatomy and for practising Surgical Operations, without extra charge.

All the opportunities for clinical and other instruction in the various Institutions of this city, will be open to the students of this School. Among these may be mentioned the advantages for studying disease afforded in the medical and surgical practice of the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Eye and Ear Infirmary, the various large Hospitals in the vicinity of the city, and also the collections of the several Anatomical and Pathological Museums. In the departments of Chemistry and Obstetrics, and of Practical Auscultation, the fullest opportunities for personal experience will be offered to students.

During the Winter a special course of lectures and instruction on Diseases of the Eye will be given by Dr. Williams. Other courses will also be given during the year by the Instructors.

Since the summer vacation such changes have been made in the organization of the School, as will increase its efficiency, and offer better inducements than have before been extended to students who wish to obtain a thorough medical education.

The fee for instruction is \$80. Its course extends over the entire year, with the exception of the vacation during August, and students may enter at any time. Those intending to pursue their studies in this city during the ensuing winter, are invited to join the School during the month of October.

The room of the School, in Liberty Tree Block, is open at all times to the students, and is furnished with anatomical preparations, plates, and other auxiliaries to study.

Catalogues may be procured at the bookstore of G. W. Briggs & Co., 456 Washington street, or at Burnett's apothecary store, 39 Tremont street.

Applications for admission may be made to Winslow Lewis, M.D., corner of Boylston and Carver sts., or H. W. Williams, M.D., 33 Essex street, who will furnish further information.

Boston, Oct. 2, 1854.